

Message Text

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C O N F I D E N T I A L LA PAZ 5933

NODIS

FOR: ASSISTANT SECRETARY VAKY - PLEASE DELIVER TO VAKY AT 8 AM THURSDAY

E.O. 11652: N/A
TAGS: PINT BL

SUBJECT: PEREDA WILLING TO OFFER NEW CONSTITUTIONALIZATION PLAN

1. JUAN PEREDA WANTS TO SEE ME PRIVATELY AT HIS HOME AT 3 PM THURSDAY.

I WILL NEED EARLY THURSDAY YOUR AUTHORIZATION TO SEE PEREDA AND, IF YOU AGREE THAT I SHOULD SEE HIM, BY 2 PM, ANY GUIDANCE YOU WISH TO GIVE ME FOR THIS MEETING. I BELIEVE I SHOULD MEET WITH HIM.

2. PEREDA'S TWO PRINCIPAL CIVILIAN ADVISORS, EDWIN TAPIA AND JAVIER ARCE, MET WITH ME TONIGHT TO TELL ME THAT PEREDA WILL MAKE THE FOLLOWING PROPOSAL IN OUR THURSDAY MEETING. NEXT WEEK PEREDA PROPOSES TO MAKE A SPEECH PRESENTING THE MAJOR MISSION OF HIS GOVERNMENT AS THAT OF BRINGING "TRUE DEMOCRACY" TO BOLIVIA. (TAPIA AND ARCE MADE LONG EXPLANATIONS OF THE CYNICISM, IRREGULARITIES, AND ARTIFICIALITY IN BANZER'S MISFIRED DEMOCRATIZATION PLAN OF 1978.) PEREDA WILL DECREE A STEP-BY-STEP SCHEDULE OF PREPARATIONS LEADING UP TO A FIRM COMMITMENT TO PRESIDENTIAL AND CONGRESSIONAL ELECTIONS IN MAY 1980 WITH THE NEW GOVERNMENT TO TAKE OFFICE IN AUGUST 1980. PEREDA WOULD PLEDGE THAT THERE WOULD BE NO OFFICIAL CANDIDATE IN SUCH

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ELECTIONS, AND THAT NEITHER THE MILITARY NOR THE GOVERNMENT WOULD PLAY ANY PART IN THE CAMPAIGN. PEREDA HIMSELF WOULD PLEDGE NOT TO BE A CANDIDATE IN THE ELECTIONS AND HE AND THE MILITARY WOULD PLEDGE TO RESPECT THE RESULTS NO MATTER WHAT. PEREDA WOULD PROPOSE THE FORM-

TION OF A NEW ELECTORAL COURT WITH INDEPENDENT POWERS AND
CONSISTING OF

REPRESENTATIVES OF ALL THE MAJOR POLITICAL PARTIES. THE COURT'S FIRST

JOB WOULD BE TO DRAFT TWO NEW DECREE LAWS, 1) A NEW ELECTORAL LAW
COVERING THE QUESTIONS OF SINGLE BALLOT, INDEPENDENT ELECTORAL
AUTHOR-

ITIES, AND OTHER ELECTION PRACTICES, AND 2) A NEW BASIC STATUTE FOR
POLITICAL PARTIES, WITHIN WHICH THE PARTIES WOULD BE GUARANTEED
COMPLETE

FREEDOM OF ACTION. (WHEN I ASKED TAPIA AND ARCE WHAT RESTRICTIONS ON
PARTY ACTIVITIES MIGHT BE CONSIDERED IN SUCH A LAW THEY SAID PERHAPS
MINIMUM STANDARDS IN TERMS OF MEMBERSHIP--TO ELIMINATE MINI-PARTIES--
PROHIBITION OF FOREIGN FINANCING AND MAYBE OUTLAWING OF THE
COMMUNIST
PARTY: THERE MAY BE SOME HOOKERS HERE, BUT ONLY TIME WILL TELL.) DEAD-

LINES WOULD BE SET FOR THE COMPLETION OF THIS WORK, REGISTRATION OF
PARTIES AND CANDIDATES AND OTHER KEY MILESTONES OF THE
DEMOCRATIZATION

PROCESS BETWEEN NOW AND THE AUGUST 6, 1980 INAUGURATION OF PEREDA'S
SUCCESSOR.

3. PEREDA'S SPEECH WOULD INCLUDE A BROAD GUARANTEE OF RESPECT FOR
HUMAN RIGHTS AND THE LIBERALIZATION OF CIVIL LIBERTIES ACHIEVED DURING

THE LAST 8 MONTHS OF THE BANZER GOVERNMENT. THERE WOULD BE GENERAL
ASSURANCES OF HONESTY IN ADMINISTRATION DURING PEREDA'S TWO-YEAR
REGIME (OJALA* THIS WOULD BE A HISTORIC FIRST) AND APPEALS FOR
NATIONAL CALM AND UNITY DURING THE TWO-YEAR PLAN.
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4. TAPIA AND ARCE EXPLAINED THE RATIONALE FOR THE MAY 1980 DATE AS
FOLLOWS. THE MILITARY WOULD NOT SIT STILL FOR THE DIVISIVENESS OF AN
ELCTION CAMPAIGN DURING THE TRAUMATIC YEAR OF THE CENTENARY OF THE
WAR OF THE PACIFIC, 1979. THE REMAINING MONTHS OF 1978 WERE SIMPLY
NOT ENOUGH TIME TO DO AN HONEST JOB ON PREPARING CLEAN ELECTIONS IN
1978. A RESPECTABLE FOR-MONTH CAMPAIGN BEGINNING IN 1980 MEANS MAY,
1980 ELCTIONS. TAPIA SAID THE MODERATE PARTIES, MOST PARTICULARLY
VICTOR PAZ' HISTORIC MNR HAD SAID THEY WOULD NOT BE READY FOR NEW
ELECTIONS UNTIL MID-1979, AND PEREDA'S PLAN WAS ASKING FOR ONLY
10 MONTHS MORE IN RETURN FOR SUBSTANTIAL BENEFITS, PARTICULARLY THE
UNEQUIVOCAL SUPPORT OF THE MILITARY.

5. IN RESPONSE TO A SERIES OF MY QUESTIONS AS TO WHO SUPPORTED THIS

PLAN HOW FIRMLY, TAPIA AND ARCE SAID THE FOLLOWING. THEY WERE VERY OPTIMISTIC ON THE BASIS OF CONTACT WITH VICTOR PAZ THAT HE WOULD SUPPORT THE PLAN. PEREDA HOPED THAT PAZ HIMSELF, WHO APPARENTLY

DOES NOT PLAN TO RUN AGAIN, WOULD AGREE TO HEAD THE NEW ELECTORAL COURT.

BERNAL WAS IN THE CLOUDS, BUT THEY FELT THEY WOULD GO ALONG. SILES WOULD WANT EARLIER ELECTIONS, AND A CONCERTED EFFORT WOULD HAVE TO BE MADE BY PEREDA TO GAIN SILES' TOLERANCE, AT LEAST. THE HARD LINERS IN

THE PEREDA GOVERNMENT, INCLUDING SPECIFICALLY INTERIOR MINISTER RICO TORO, WOULD SUPPORT THE PLAN IF IT MEANT PEACE WITH THE U.S.

PEREDA WAS HALF WAY THROUGH A CONSULTATION WITH THE MILITARY GARRISONS AND WAS GETTING THE GENERAL REACTION THAT THE PLAN WAS AN HONORABLE SOLUTION.

6. TAPIA AND ARCE SAID THERE WAS ONLY ONE CONDITION. PEREDA WANTED THIS SPEECH TO BE HIS INITIATIVE AND NOT THE RESULT OF U.S. PRESSURE. THEREFORE, IT WAS CRITICAL THAT MY MEETING WITH HIM BE SECRET AND THAT

(THE CONDITION) THE U.S. RECOGNIZE THE PEREDA GOVERNMENT A COUPLE OF CONFIDENTIAL

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DAYS BEFORE PEREDA'S SPEECH. IN A DECENT INTERVAL AFTER THE SPEECH IT WOULD BE GREATLY APPRECIATED IF I COULD SIGN A SIGNIFICANT AID LOAN OR TWO TO INDICATE THAT U.S. ECONOMIC COOPERATION GOES ON.

7. WHEN IT GOT DOWN TO THE EYBALL-TO-EYEBALL CODA OF THIS PRESENTATION

TAPIA SAID THAT THEY HAD DONE THE BEST THEY COULD WITH THE HARD-LINERS IN THE MILITARY AND THE PEREDA GOVERNMENT AND WERE CONVINCED THIS PLAN WOULD WORK. DESPITE WHAT THEIR (OBSCENITY) PRESS ATTACHE IN WASHINGTON HAD TO SAY ABOUT ME, THEY KNEW I HAD HARDER-LINERS TO DEAL WITH AS WELL. IT WAS OF HISTORIC IMPORTANCE FOR BOLIVIA THEY FELT,

THAT THE HARD LINERS ON BOTH SIDES NOW BE CONVINCED THAT THE PLAN PROPOSED WAS THE MOST REALISTIC AND BROADLY ACCEPTABLE BASIS FOR SAVING BOLIVIA FROM A NEW BOUT OF REPRESSION AND ABORTED DECOCRATIZATION. IF SUCH A PLAN WOULD NOT BE LAUNCHED AND GARNER EARLY PEACE WITH THE U.S., THEY FEARED THE WORST.

8. COMMENT: MY PERSONAL VIEW IS THAT THE PEREDA PLAN IS FOR US A

BIT BETTER THAN HALF A LOAF AND PERHAPS THE BEST WE ARE GOING TO GET. PEREDA IS FEELING WEAK AND THE PRICE HE IS ASKING (E.G. NO COMMITMENT ON FUTURE AID LEVELS) IS LOW. HE FACES A DEVELOPING PROBLEM OF VIOLENCE AND MY ASSESSMENT IS HE HAS ONLY TWO WAYS TO GO: BATTEN DOWN

THE HATCHES AND REPRESS HIS OPPOSITION OR PUT HIMSELF BACK IN THE STREAM OF DEMOCRATIZATION AND MAKE THIS COMMITMENT THE BASIS OF A NO-BOAT-ROCKING PEACE WITH THE OPPOSITION AND OTHER DISILLUSIONED ELEMENTS WHO THOUGHT THEY WERE GETTING REPRESENTATIVE GOVERNMENT ON JULY 9. IF HE SPLITS THE DIFFERENCE, WHICH WAS HIS ORIGINAL INCLINATION, HE FACES INEFFECTUAL GOVERNMENT, STRIDENT OPPOSITION AND MOST LIKELY A COUP IN 6 TO 12 MONTHS BY ELEMENTS WITH UNKNOWABLE OBJECTIVES. MY RECOMM-
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ENDATION WOULD BE TO SEIZE THE OPPORTUNITY TO PUSH IM DECISEVELY INTO THE DEMOCRATIZATION PATH. ONCE HE IS THERE HE MAY WELL FIND HE HAS TO NEGOTIATE MORE WITH THE CIVILIAN PARTIES ON DATES AND MODES TO GET THEIR SUPPORT. THEY CAN NEGOTIATE THESE ELEMENTS. WE CAN NOT WITHOUT RISKING A POWERFUL BACKLAHS OF OFFENDED SOVEREIGNTY.

9. ON THE CRITICAL POINT OF THE RATHER LATE MAY 1980 ELECTION DATE, I SUSPECT THERE IS A TRADE OFF BETWEEN A LATER DATE AND PEREDA HIMSELF AGREEING NOT TO RUN. IF SO, THE BETTER HALF OF THE TRADE IS A PUBLIC COMMITMENT FOR PEREDA NOT TO RUN. TAPIA AND ARCE ARE RIGHT, I KNOW FROM MY OWN CONTACTS, THAT THE CENTER PARTIES DO NOT THINK THEY WILL BE READY FOR AT LEAST A YEAR. (VICTOR PAZ' ELECTORAL PREFERENCE WAS 1212 TO 18 MONTHS FROM NOW, BUT IN HIS PARTY'S STATEMENT HE CHOSE TO SAY "WITHIN 12 MONTHS" BECAUSE HE THOUGHT THE LONGER PERIOD SOUNDED LIKE A POSITON OF TACTICAL WEAKNESS. THE POINT ABOUT NO ELECTIONS POSSIBLE IN 1979 IS HALF BULL, BUT MANY GENERALS BELIEVE IT, SO IT HAS SOME WEIGHT IN BOLIVIAN REALITY. HAVING BEEN BURNED ONCE BY LEAKS, I AM NOT INFORMING ANY OF MY COLLEAGUES OF THESE CONVERSATIONS. HOPE YOU CAN HOLD IT CLOSELY ON YOUR END AS WELL.
BOEKER

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